

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

Power window mechanisms are commonly known. Recently, one-touch up power windows have been included in vehicles which allow the window to be closed by a single press of the power window operating button. Additionally, such mechanisms are known for vehicle sunroofs and the like. The proliferation of such power window mechanisms has increased the possibility that an object could be captured in the closing window.

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SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

In operation the emitter transmits a signal through a defined field adjacent a closure path of a moveable closure member. The controller preferably constructs a "normal" map signature of the received signal which includes the obstructions normally within the defined field. The "normal" map signature is used by the controller as a reference and indicates that no unknown objects are within the defined field.

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difference from the "normal" map signature is identified as an unknown object in the closure path and is an undesirable obstruction.

When an object is determined to be in the defined field, the controller halts or reverses the movement of the moveable glass member to prevent trapping the object between the closing moveable glass member and the frame. Preferably, the emitter is maintained in a dormant state and operated only when the moveable glass member is being closed.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

The various features and advantages of this invention will become apparent to those skilled in the art from the following detailed description of the currently preferred embodiment. The drawings that accompany the detailed description can be briefly described as follows:

Figure 1 is a general schematic representation of a vehicle having a moveable window;

Figure 2 is a general schematic representation of the object detection system according to the present invention;

Figure 3 is a graphical representation of a mapped signal according to the present invention; and

Figure 4 is a top-down view of the moveable closure member line illustrating an alternate embodiment of the object detection system according to the present invention.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENT

Figure 1 illustrates an object detection system 10 according to the present invention. The system 10 is preferably attachable or integral to a window assembly 12 having a moveable closure member 14. The moveable closure member 14, such as a vehicle window is movable through a closure path (shown schematically by double arrow 15) within a frame 16 typical of a vehicle 17 having a power window, sunroof, or the like.

As shown in Figure 2, the system 10 generally includes an emitter 18, a receiver 20, and a controller 22 attachable to the window assembly 12. As will be more fully described below, the emitter 18 transmits a signal (shown schematically at 24) through a defined field 26 adjacent the closure path 15 of moveable closure member 14. The controller 22 constructs a map of the signal 24 received by the receiver 20 such that insertion of an object (shown schematically at 33) within the defined field produces a variation in the map. The controller 22 can then halt or reverse the movement of the moveable closure member 14 to prevent trapping object 33 between the closing moveable glass member 14 and the frame 16.

The emitter 18 is preferably positioned adjacent the moveable glass member 14 in the frame 16. The receiver 20 is mounted adjacent the moveable glass member 14 in the frame 16 to receive the signal 24 reflection. It is further preferred that a second emitter 18' and receiver 20' are mounted adjacent the moveable closure member 14. The second emitter 18' transmits a second signal (shown schematically at 24') through a second defined field 26' adjacent the closure path 15 of moveable closure member 14.

When an unknown object 33 is determined to be within the defined field 26, the controller 22 halts or reverses the movement of the moveable glass member 14 to prevent trapping the object between the closing moveable closure member 14 and the frame 16. To achieve this control, controller 22 communicates with an actuator 34 for the moveable closure member 14. To conserve power, the emitter 18 can be maintained in a dormant state and operated only when the actuator 34 is operating and the moveable closure member 14 is being closed.

In operation, the emitter 18 transmits the signal 24 within the defined field 26. The signal 24 is preferably an electromagnetic or ultrasonic signal and emitter 18 may transmit the signal 24 continuously or in a pulse to minimize power usage.

The transmitted signal 24 will reflect from obstructions that are always within the defined field 26 such as portions of the frame 16. The receiver 20 will therefore receive a relatively constant reflection which is identified by the controller 22. Whereas the receiver 20 receives a relatively constant signal 24 reflection, the controller 22 constructs

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"normal" map signature 30 is not adjusted. Any object 33 that is identified in both defined fields 26, 26' both inside and outside the window, is in the closure path 15 and is an undesirable obstruction. Thus, as illustrated in the top view of Figure 4, if the object 33 is in both defined fields 26, 26', the controller 22 can halt or reverse the movement of the moveable glass member 14.

The foregoing description is exemplary rather than defined by the limitations within. Many modifications and variations of the present invention are possible in light of the above teachings. The preferred embodiments of this invention have been disclosed, however, one of ordinary skill in the art would recognize that certain modifications would come within the scope of this invention. It is, therefore, to be understood that within the scope of the appended claims, the invention may be practiced otherwise than as specifically described. For that reason the following claims should be studied to determine the true scope and content of this invention.